

Senate Families and Human Services Committee
Tuesday, February 10, 2009

**Testimony of Dona Abbott, Kent County Branch Director, Bethany Christian Services on
behalf of the Michigan Federation for Children and Families**

Children on MARE

Challenge:

1. Youth who have special placement needs
2. Anticipate a significant increase

Solutions:

1. RFP for children on MARE
2. All DHS youth listed
3. Programs such as Bethany's Reconnect Program or Wendy's Wonderful Kids (Spaulding for Children, Family Service and Children's Aid, St. Vincent Catholic Charities)

Recruitment

Challenge:

1. Expense of media advertising
2. Labor Intensive
3. No reimbursement until a placement occurs

Solutions:

1. Seek State wide Public Service announcement
2. Reimburse agencies for recruitment outcomes
3. Programs like Bethany's Open Arms & Homes for Black Children Family Ties Programs

Post Adoption

Challenge:

1. No RFP for over three years
2. No local case management service
3. No consistently funded outreach model of minimal service provision

Solution:

1. RFP Post Adoption Services
2. Case management Services could be included in the adoption contract
3. Agencies have had innovative and successful privately and federal funded post adopt programs

Settlement Agreement

Challenge:

1. Lowered caseload
2. Increased number of TDMs
3. Concurrent Planning
4. Increased reporting
5. Staff training
6. Recruitment expectations
7. Time frame outcomes

Agency Resources

1. Donations
2. Foundation & Federal Grants